

Message Text

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73

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03

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FM AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4567

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL BELFAST

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E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: PBOR/ EI

SUBJ: SINN FEIN IN CONFUSION

BEGIN SUMMARY: " OFFICIAL" SINN FEIN HAS ANNOUNCED
PLANS TO CONTEST NI ELECTIONS, BUT " PROVISIONAL"
LEADERSHIP HAS NOT GIVEN ANY EFFECTIVE RESPONSE TO NEW
POLITICAL CHALLENGE. GIVEN CONFUSION WITHIN PROVOS,
IT IS HARD TO KNOW WHETHER MOVEMENT COULD BE WEANED FROM
VIOLENCE IF SINN FEIN WERE LEGALIZED AND ALLOWED CONTEST
ELECTIONS. END SUMMARY

1. TOMAS MACGIOLLA, PRESIDENT OF OFFICIAL SINN FEIN,
SAID THAT PARTY WOULD RUN 80 CANDIDATES FOR MAY ELECTIONS
IN NORTH. SPEAKING IN DUBLIN APRIL 8, MACGIOLLA NOTED
THAT CANDIDATES HAD ALREADY BEEN SELECTED AND RATIFIED.
THEY ARE TO CAMPAIGN UNDER AUSPICES OF NI " REPUBLICAN
CLUBS," A SINN FEIN FRONT. NI BAN ON REPUBLICAN CLUBS
WAS RECENTLY LIFTED, BUT NOT THAT ON SINN FEIN.
ACCORDING PRESS REPORTS, MACGIOLLA SAID THAT BRITISH
GOVT HAD PLACED ITSELF IN RIDICULOUS SITUATION
BY MAINTAINING BANN ON SINN FEIN WHILE LEGALIZING CLUBS
WHICH WERE AN INTEGRAL PART OF IT.

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2. SITUATION OF PROVISIONAL SINN FEIN IS SO CONFUSED THAT SOURCES HERE BELIEVE PROVOS SIMPLY LACK LEADERSHIP WITH ENOUGH COHESION AND AUTHORITY TO RESPOND TO NI POLITICAL CHANGES. JOURNALIST JOHN MULCAHY OF HIBERNIA, WHO HAS HAD GOOD CONTACTS WITH BOTH SINN FEIN/ IRA WINGS, SAYS THAT " ENTIRE DESTINY OF THE MOVEMENT HAS BEEN HANDED OVER TO GUNMEN AND POLITICAL ILLITERATES." HE NOTES, HOWEVER, THAT THERE IS " NO SPLIT IN THE PROVOS ... YOU CAN' T SPLIT CHAOS." OTHER DUBLIN CONTACTS CLOSE TO PROVOS HAVE HAD SIMILAR OPINION FOR SEVERAL WEEKS.

3. MULCAHY WAS COMMENTING ON SITUATION IN WHICH PROVOS' MAIN " POLITICAL" LEADER, DAITHI O' CONNELL, KEEPS PUTTING OUT HINTS THAT CEASEFIRE MAY BE IMMINENT. UNFORTUNATELY, HINTS ALWAYS TURN OUT TO BE MISLEADING. O' CONNELL DOES APPEAR TO HAVE GOOD FEEL FOR POLITICS, AND HE COULD NOT FAIL TO BE AWARE OF HEAVY PRESSURE FOR END TO VIOLENCE. NUMEROUS NI AND ALL- IRELAND GROUPS HAVE CALLED FOR CEASEFIRE. SUCH CALLS ARE OFTEN LINKED TO FORTHCOMING NI ELECTIONS AND POSSIBILITY THAT PROVOS MAY CONTEST THEM.

4. DUBLIN GOVT HOPES THAT PROVOS CAN BE ALLOWED CONTEST ELECTIONS AND HAS FREQUENTLY LEAKED THIS HOPE TO NEWSPAPERS. BELIEVE DUBLIN HAS ALSO MADE THINKING CLEAR TO WHITELAW AND HEATH. BRITISH, HOWEVER, FACE OBVIOUS DILEMMA. PROVOS CANNOT BE EXPECTED COMPETE IN ELECTIONS WHILE THEIR POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IS ILLEGAL. ON OTHER HAND, WITH SUCH CONFUSION IN PROVO LEADERSHIP, WHO IN MOVEMENT CAN GIVE ASSURANCES THAT VIOLENCE WILL CEASE IF SINN FEIN IS LEGALIZED? POLITICIANS HERE SEEM TO EXPECT THAT BRITISH WILL TAKE CALCULATED RISK.

5. ON THIS SIDE OF BORDER, DUBLIN GOVT HAS MOVED AGAINST ACTIVITY LEADING TO VIOLENCE-- NOTABLY ARMS SMUGGLING-- BUT MAY BE EASING UP ON OVERT POLITICAL ACTIVITY. PROVO SINN FEIN HAS BEEN ALLOWED TO REOCCUPY ITS KEVIN STREET OFFICES, WHICH WERE CLOSED IN OCTOBER ON GROUNDS THAT THEY WERE BEING USED FOR PURPOSES OF UNLAWFUL ORGANIZATION. EX- CHIEF OF STAFF SEAN MACSTIOFAIN IS EXPECTED BE RELEASED FROM PRISON WITHIN FEW DAYS, HAVING SERVED NORMAL PORTION OF HIS SENTENCE.
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MACSTIOFAIN RELEASE IS IN JUDICIAL AREA AND MAY HAVE NO

POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE, BUT REOPENING OF KEVIN STREET OFFICES SEEMS POLITICAL GESTURE AND MAY BE INTENDED ALLOW PREPARATION FOR NI ELECTIONS.

6. LOCAL SOURCES SAY THAT PROVOS ARE SHAKEN BY LONDON " SUNDAY TIMES" DISCLOSURE THAT TWO PROVO GROUPS FROM BELFAST EMBEZZLED LARGE SUM OF MOVEMENT' S FUNDS FOR PERSONAL USE OF OFFICERS. RUTHLESS HONESTY IS PART OF PROVO MYSTIQUE, AND CONSPICUOUS DEPARTURE FROM STANDARD CAN ONLY COME AS ANOTHER HARSH BLOW.

7. COMMENT: DUBLIN GOVT IS ON SOLID HISTORICAL GROUNDS IN URGING THAT IT IS WORTH SOME RISK IN ORDER DRAW PROVOS INTO POLITICAL PROCESS. O' CONNELL, AND PROBABLY SEVERAL OTHER LEADING PROVOS, SEEM WILLING TO ALONG. IT IS SIMPLY NOT CLEAR, HOWEVER, WHETHER MOVEMENT AS A WHOLE CAN BE BROUGHT TO ACCEPT NON- VIOLENT APPROACH, ESPECIALLY WHEN TERMS WOULD HAVE TO BE LESS FAVORABLE THAN PROVOS WERE OFFERED AT PEAK OF THEIR STRENGTH.
MOORE

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